

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #57

SEINE FISHERIES: An aerial survey of the Montague and Southeastern districts was flown yesterday. Aerial surveys of the Eastern, Northern, Unakwik, Coghill, Northwestern, Eshamy and Southwestern districts are scheduled for early next week. Wild stock pink salmon indices have been tracking below anticipated numbers in the Eshamy District and some portions of the Southwestern District, which has led to some area restrictions in the Southwestern District.

Preliminary harvest reports suggest that approximately 178,000 pink salmon were harvested in Prince William Sound on Wednesday, August 22. Cumulative CPF pink salmon harvest in the Northern, Coghill, Northwestern, Southwestern and Montague districts since July 21 is approximately 11.7 million fish. Cumulative CPF pink salmon harvest in Prince William Sound through August 22 is approximately 22.5 million fish.

VFDA began their pink salmon eggtakes at the Solomon Gulch Hatchery on Thursday, August 2 and reports meeting their eggtake goal of 230 million green eggs on August 22. VFDA reports minimal surplus pink salmon at Solomon Gulch Hatchery. There will not be a Port Valdez pink salmon clean up fishery in 2012.

PWSAC reports the following pink salmon broodstock collection progress through August 23: up to 240,000 fish at AFK; up to 250,000 fish at CCH; and up to 260,000 fish at WNH. Through August 23, PWSAC would expect the following pink salmon broodstock collection progress: 240,000 fish at AFK; 309,000 fish at CCH; and 242,000 fish at WNH. PWSAC's pink salmon broodstock requirements are 309,000 fish at AFK, 357,000 fish at CCH and 283,000 fish at WNH. PWSAC has provided area recommendations for fishing in hatchery subdistricts on Friday, August 24. Time and area for future CPF openings will be based on PWSAC broodstock collection progress and wild stock escapement indices.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding waters of the WNH THA, WNH SHA, Esther Subdistrict and Granite Bay Subdistrict, will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine harvest for a 12-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 24. The preliminary commercial harvest estimate from the 12-hour period on Wednesday, August 22 is approximately 20 coho and 330 pink salmon with 3 deliveries reported.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District, south of a line from Entrance Point to Potato Point, will open to commercial fishing for a 12-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 24. Waters of the Eastern District east of 145° 57.12' W. long., including waters of Simpson Bay and Nelson Bay, will be closed to commercial fishing during this period. Waters inside of the SHTF Markers in Sawmill Bay and Jack Bay will be closed for this fishing period. The preliminary commercial harvest estimate from the 12-hour period on Wednesday, August 22 is approximately 10 coho, 3,800 pink and 1,700 chum salmon with 3 deliveries reported.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial fishing for a 12-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 24. There was no reported harvest for the commercial fishing period on Wednesday, August 22.

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District, excluding waters of the CCH THA, CCH SHA, and excluding waters of the Cannery Creek Subdistrict north of 60° 58.00 N. Lat., will open to commercial fishing for a 12-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 24. The preliminary commercial harvest estimate from the 12-hour period on Wednesday, August 22 is approximately 37,400 pink salmon with 16 deliveries reported.

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial fishing for a 12-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 24. There was no reported harvest for the commercial fishing period on Wednesday, August 22.

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial fishing for a 12-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 24. There was no reported harvest for the commercial fishing period on Wednesday, August 22.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southwestern District, excluding waters of the AFK THA, AFK SHA, Port San Juan Subdistrict, and excluding all waters of Knight Island Passage north of Squire Point and west of Passage Point, will open to commercial fishing for a 12-hour fishing period beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 24. The preliminary commercial harvest estimate from the 12-hour period on Wednesday, August 22 is approximately 136,500 pink salmon with 52 deliveries reported.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing** (5AAC 39.130(c)(10)). Fish tickets have a “not sold/personal use” field to report these salmon.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Saturday, August 25. Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.